

## Message Text

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12/15

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DOD/JCS:COL. LAFFERTY (SUBS)

S/S - MR. PICKERING

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO NATO

INFO ANATO

S E C R E T STATE 165537

C O R R E C T E D COPY (OMISSION OF LINE 5 AND 7 IN PARA. 5  
SUB PARA. A)

E.O. 11652 GDS

TAGS: PARM, NATO

SUBJECT: MBFR: RESPONSE TO THE UK PAPER "MEASURING COMBAT  
EFFECTIVENESS"

1. THE FOLLOWING COMMENTS ARE FOR MISSION'S USE IN THE  
MBFR WORKING GROUP DISCUSSION OF THE UK PAPER ON MEASURING  
COMBAT CAPABILITY. THEY ARE DESIGNED TO PROVIDE A CRITIQUE  
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OF SOME BASIC POINTS IN THE PAPER, AND A BASIS FOR TURNING  
THE ARGUMENT AWAY FROM THE NUTS AND BOLTS OF THE UK PAPER  
TO THE BROADER PROPOSITION THAT NO SINGLE METHOD CAN POS-  
SIBLY BE USED AS THE ONE MEASURE OF THE EFFECTS OF AN MBFR  
OPTION.

2. AS THE ALLIES ARE AWARE, THE US SHARES THE VIEW THAT THE EFFECTS OF REDUCTION ON COMBAT CAPABILITY SHOULD BE AN IMPORTANT CRITERION FOR ASSESSING ANY REDUCTION PROPOSAL. WE HAVE SEVERAL PROBLEMS, HOWEVER, WITH THE METHODOLOGY PROPOSED BY THE UK. IN PRESENTATIONS OF AMERICAN MILITARY ANALYSES WE HAVE REPEATEDLY STRESSED THAT DIFFERENT ANALYTICAL METHODS AND YARDSTICKS EACH CONTRIBUTE INSIGHTS INTO ASPECTS OF THE NATURE OF THE BALANCE. NO ONE METHOD IS SO PRECISE OR SO INCLUSIVE THAT IT CAN BE RELIED UPON EXCLUSIVELY. TO ATTEMPT TO DO SO WOULD, IN OUR VIEW, CONSTITUTE AN EXCESSIVELY SIMPLISTIC APPROACH TO AN IMPORTANT PROBLEM. ALL OF THE METHODS OF MILITARY ANALYSIS ARE EXTREMELY SENSITIVE TO ASSUMPTIONS IN THEIR CONSTRUCTION AND

APPLICATION. NO ONE OF THEM CAN BE TAKEN FOR A PHILOSOPHER'S STONE WHICH YIELDS INSTANT ANSWERS TO COMPLEX QUESTIONS. IN PARTICULAR, THE BRITISH EFFORT TO DESIGN A SIMPLIFIED SYSTEM FOR QUICK ANALYSES AND THE REDUCTION PROPOSALS IMPLIED BY IT HAVE SEVERAL LIMITATIONS. WE SEE THE FOLLOWING AS THE MOST IMPORTANT OF THESE LIMITATIONS.

3. EVEN THOUGH THE BRITISH STATE THAT THE U.S. METHODS ARE TOO SOPHISTICATED FOR USE IN ALL MBFR DISCUSSIONS, IT IS NOT CLEAR THAT THE UK STANDARD BATTLE GROUP (SBG) MEASURE WOULD BE BETTER. IF NATO USES SBGS INTERNALLY, THERE IS A MAJOR RISK THAT WE MIGHT DRAW ERRONEOUS CONCLUSIONS; THIS IS DISCUSSED MORE FULLY BELOW. TO ATTEMPT TO USE SBGS IN NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE SOVIETS WOULD PROBABLY RESULT IN CONSIDERABLE CONFUSION: WE WOULD FIRST HAVE TO EDUCATE THEM TO THE SBG CONCEPT AND THEN ATTEMPT TO DEFEND THE CONCEPT, WHICH COULD BE DIFFICULT IN LIGHT OF ARGUMENTS NOTED BELOW. THIS COULD ALSO DETRACT FROM THE SIMPLICITY AND FIRMNESS OF THE COMMON CEILING CONCEPT.

4. IN NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE PACT AND IN OUR PUBLIC STATE-  
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MENTS, WE SHOULD EMPHASIZE SIMPLICITY OF PRESENTATION. WE BELIEVE OUR COMMON CEILING APPROACH MEETS THIS NEED. MOST OF THE NECESSARY DISCUSSION OF FORCES CAN BE ACCOMPLISHED BY REFERRING EITHER TO ACTUAL COMBAT UNITS OR TO AGGREGATE PERSONNEL FIGURES. IN PRACTICAL TERMS, ANY ATTEMPT TO DEVISE MEASURES OF COMBAT CAPABILITY SUITABLE FOR USE IN NEGOTIATIONS WOULD ADD GREAT DIFFICULTIES IN ACHIEVING ALLIED AGREEMENT ON A CONCRETE REDUCTION PROPOSAL.

5. THE UK PAPER ADVANCES A METHOD FOR CONSTRUCTING REDUCTION PROPOSALS WHICH SEEMS LIKELY TO PRODUCE RESULTS LESS FAVORABLE THAN THE PROVISIONS OF THE US PROPOSAL. FURTHER, THE UK PAPER WOULD BE LIKELY TO GENERATE LENGTHY DEBATE ON SUBJECTIVE JUDGMENTS AS DISCUSSED BELOW.

A. THE UK PAPER SUGGESTS A PROPORTIONATE REDUCTION BASED ON THE IN-PLACE AND REINFORCING BATTALIONS ON EACH SIDE. NEVERTHELESS, ALTHOUGH THE NUMBERS USED IN THE UK PAPER DO REFLECT THE MOBILIZATION ASYMMETRIES BY INCLUDING REINFORCING UNITS, THE WP CAN BE EXPECTED TO SEEK TO RESTRICT THE BASE OF REDUCTIONS TO ONLY THOSE FORCES CURRENTLY IN THE AREA OF REDUCTION. SINCE WE TOO WOULD NOT WISH TO NEGOTIATE ABOUT SPECIFIC MOBILIZATION AND REIN-

FORCEMENT SCHEDULES THIS WOULD REDUCE THE PACT/NATO SGB RATIO SIGNIFICANTLY.

B. FURTHERMORE, THE WP CAN BE EXPECTED TO CONSIDER THE TOTAL INVENTORY OF NATO FORCES IN THE NGA INDEPENDENT OF THEIR POLITICAL COMMITMENT TO THE DPW. THIS MIGHT NECESSITATE THE INCLUSION OF ALLIED FORCES APPARENTLY NOT SHOWN WITHIN THE UK FIGURES. (FYI. WE BELIEVE THESE INCLUDE FRG TERRITORIALS, THE GERMAN FORCES IN AFNORTH, AND NUMEROUS BELGIAN, DUTCH, AND BRITISH BATTALIONS, WHICH, IF INCLUDED WOULD INCREASE THE NATO M 23 SGB COUNT BY ABOUT A THIRD. END FYI.)

C. BECAUSE OF THE ABOVE CONSIDERATIONS, THE REDUCTION APPROACH TAKEN BY THE UK PAPER COULD LEAD TO AN OUTCOME LESS FAVORABLE TO NATO THAN THE US PROPOSAL, AND WITH NO SECRET

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FLEXIBILITY TO REDUCE THE IMPACT ON NATO IMMEDIATE COMBAT CAPABILITY. OUR PROPOSAL SEEKS TO REDUCE SOVIET COMBAT CAPABILITY BY THE CONCRETE OBJECTIVE OF ONE GSFG TANK ARMY, WHILE IT SEEKS TO AVOID ANY RESTRICTIONS ON THE METHOD OF US REDUCTION, USING AS ITS RATIONALE THE REINFORCEMENT ASYMMETRIES.

D. APART FROM THE ABOVE OBJECTIONS, THE SOVIETS WOULD LIKELY FIND COMPLETELY UNACCEPTABLE ANY REDUCTION RATIONALE THAT ASSUMES THAT THE PACT MOBILIZES FIRST.

6. WE HAVE FURTHER OBJECTIONS TO THE SGB CONCEPT AS DEVELOPED IN THE UK PAPER:

A. AS DEFINED, A NATO SGB IS NOT EQUIVALENT TO A WP SGB. A NATO SBF IS NUMERICALLY SUPERIOR IN ALMOST ALL CATEGORIES INCLUDING PERSONNEL AND TANKS. MOREOVER, MOST ACTUAL NATO COMBAT BATTALION-SIZED UNITS WOULD PROBABLY PLAY A MORE INDEPENDENT TACTICAL ROLE THAN WOULD PACT BATTALIONS.

B. THE UK-PROPOSED SBF OMITTS MANY FACTORS RELEVANT TO COMBAT CAPABILITY. UNLIKE MOST U.S. MEASURES OF EFFECTIVENESS, THE UK SGB CONCEPT DOES NOT COMPARE SMALL ARMS, OR

INCLUDE ANY ARTILLERY OTHER THAN THOSE PIECES ORGANIC TO OR NORMALLY IN DIRECT SUPPORT OF COMBAT BATTALIONS. THUS IT APPEARS TO EXCLUDE DIVISIONAL GENERAL SUPPORT ARTILLERY BATTALIONS, ALL CORPS-LEVEL ARTILLERY AND FRG MULTIPLE ROCKET LAUNCHER BATTALIONS. MOREOVER, ANY SIMPLE COMPARISON OF NUMERICAL ELEMENTS AS IN THE UK PAPER TAKES NO ACCOUNT OF QUALITATIVE FACTORS.

C. THE USE OF AN AVERAGE SBG CONCEALS THE WIDE RANGE IN SIZE AND STRUCTURE OF NATO'S BATTALIONS. THEREFORE, THERE APPEARS TO BE NO NEGOTIABLE METHOD FOR TRANSLATING AN AGREED REDUCTION MEASURED IN SBGS INTO THE REDUCTION OF ACTUAL COMBAT UNITS. ROGERS

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